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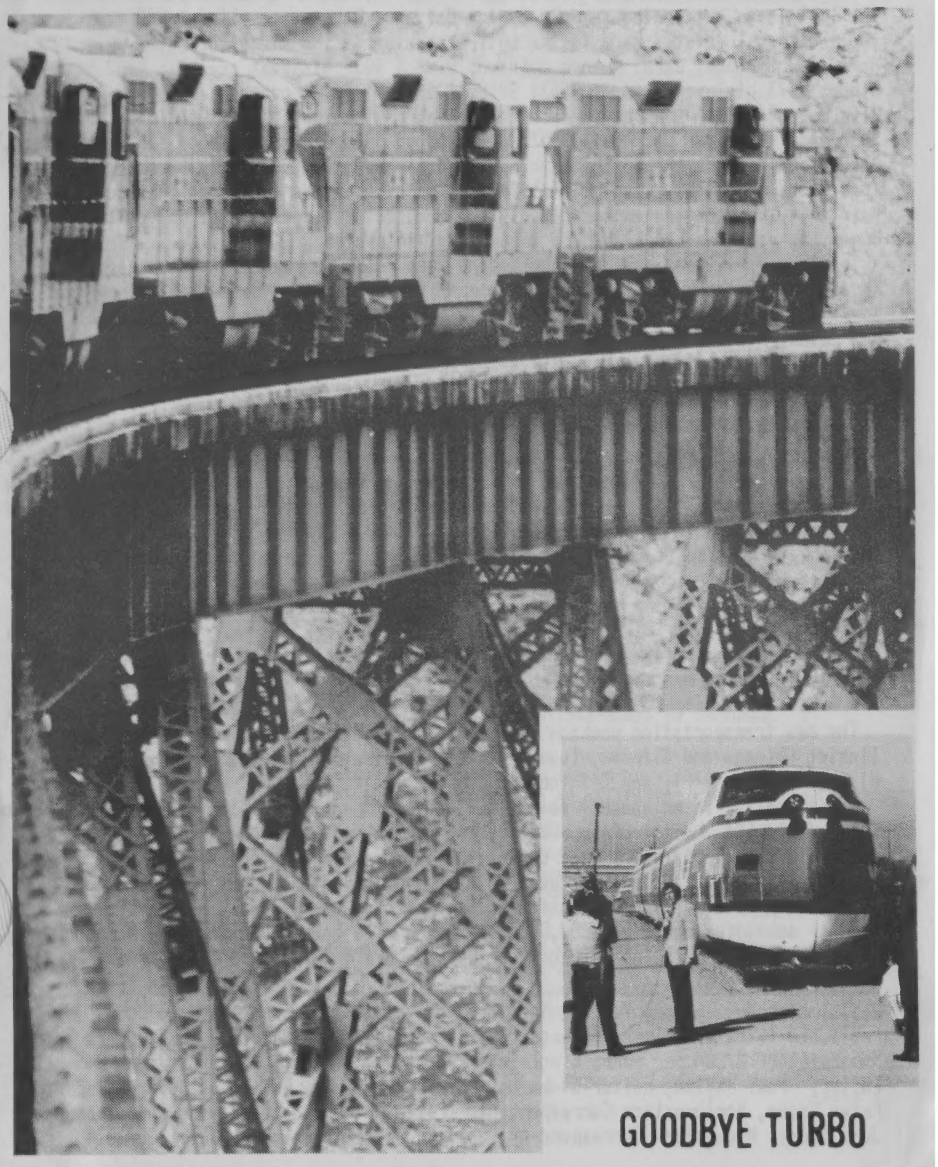
# rail travel newsletter

30¢

VOL. 4 NO. 14
SECOND ISSUE OF
JULY 1974
#88





GOODBYE TURBO

## ON THE COVER:

Canada's Algoma Central Railway train No. 1, northbound in early October, 1973, crosses the Montreal River Trestle at mile 92. Four GP engines are hauling a quarter-mile-long consist toward the Agawa Canyon. See the story of Al Crossley and Tom Durkin's trip north to Hearst, Ontario starting on page 6. Photo by Al Crossley. (Inset): The United Aircraft TurboTrain on its round-the-country tour sits on display at Oakland, California on August 26, 1971, as a TV newsman describes the event for the camera. See article elsewhere in this issue on the termination of manufacture of this train. Photo by Message Media.

### REPORT ON SOUTHWEST LIMITED WRECKED CONSIST

The derailment of Amtrak's SOUTHWEST LIMITED (nee SUPER CHIEF) reported on here in the last issue, occurring on July 5 near Melvern, Kansas, resulted in 13 cars leaving the track. Listed here is the entire consist of the affected train (#4): Amtrak cars 1097 baggage; dorm, number unknown; 9906 & 9935 hi-level coaches; 9982 hi-level diner; 9973 hi-level lounge; 9963, 9949, & 9907 hi-level coaches; sleepers 2214 "Indian Lake," 2724 "Pine Leaf," 2723 "Pine King"; (the last 6 cars went over the embankment in varying degrees:) 9352 dome lounge; 8073 diner; sleepers 2753 "Palm Leaf," 2360 "Regal Center," 2636 "Pacific Sunset," & 2688 ex-SP 9010 thru sleeper to New York. One report of a superficial inspection of the cars following the accident said that the sleepers appeared badly damaged, but the dome lounge only mildly (the diner had been removed elsewhere and was not inspected).

In other derailment news, in the Second June issue we reported that the June 17 derailment of the FLORIDIAN near Indianapolis was the first derailment since that of April 30 at Winamac, Indiana. This is in error, since Passenger Train Journal (Summer issue) lists a derailment of the FLORIDIAN on May 10 at Seymour, Indiana, in which 6 cars left the tracks. PTJ also reports that Amtrak train 413, an RDC unit, derailed at Hartford, CT on May 18 when a switch was vandalized.

### BIG ILLINOIS TRANSPORTATION APPROPRIATION

A whopping $2.1 billion state transportation plan was approved by the Illinois General Assemply on July 12 and sent to Governor Dan Walker for his signature. The plan calls for $5.3 million in subsidies to passenger rail routes throughout the state and includes $500,000 for the Chicago-Galesburg-Quincy ILLINOIS ZEPHYR, $1.5 million for the Rock Island-Peoria-Chicago route, and $1.4 million for a train between Chicago, Kankakee, Champaign and Decatur, Illinois. THE ILLINI is presently being operated only between Chicago and Champaign, and was scheduled to be extended to Decatur, Illinois; however, difficulties concerning crew operations and the unwillingness of the N&W to operate the train into Decatur have resulted in many delays. The Illinois General Assemply apparently is determined to have this train terminate in Decatur, Illinois' third largest city, and thus has appropriated a substantial subsidy for it.

The new transportation package also calls for $424,000 for reviving rail service linking Chicago and Clinton, Iowa with five stops along the way: Geneva, DeKalb, Dixon, Sterling (IL), and Clinton (IA).

Additionally, in an unusual move, $800,000 was approved for the Chicago-Bloomington-Springfield (St. Louis) STATE HOUSE to run with a full-service dining car. This is the train many legislators take during the legislative sessions. This train, which is actually subsidized only between Chicago and Springfield, but runs thru to St. Louis due to poor servicing facilities at Springfield, carries only a snack-bar-coach.

Other subsidies would be $200,000 for new service between Chicago and Rockford and $500,000 for the existing Chicago-East Dubuque BLACK HAWK. The Governor is expected to sign the new bill.

--Jack Ferry.

Rail Travel Newsletter, Vol. 4, No. 14 (Whole No. 88), Second Issue of July, 1974. Published twice monthly by Message Media, P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley, California 94709. Subscription $7.00 per year; single copy 30¢ (vol. 1-3 25¢). STAFF: James Russell, Editor; Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large; Kenneth Maylath, East Coast Correspondent; Peter Roehm, Northeastern Correspondent; Peter Putnam Bretz, Roving Correspondent; John Ferry, Midwestern Correspondent. Mailing date this issue: July 26, 1974.

## LETTERS

I read with much interest Glenn Lee's article, "Notes on Car Design," * Altho I am not a professional passenger car expert, I have followed the lightweight fleet quite closely since 1960 as a hobby. I have never thought of passenger cars from Mr. Lee's point of view, and I find his ideas most thought-provoking and sound. He has presented a very good answer to the "lighter is better" people, and I must agree that the future of passenger cars lies in something standard and flexible--not exotic and quaint.

I would like to recommend standard types of cars similar in design to present ones. I suggest that Amtrak do away with the hi-level and Articulated approach and standardize with five basic types of cars compatible with the present fleet. The railroads played the articulated game in the 1930's and 1950's and decided to forget it. Amtrak should do the same by not placing money into the Turbos and hi-level.

The hi-level cars cannot operate in the eastern corridor area, which is the biggest market for passengers in the U.S. It looks good on a mathematical (revenue passengers per car) basis, but it will require far more cars overall to equip a hi-level in addition to a standard level fleet. Articulated trains cannot be expanded or contracted to meet demand, and an entire train must be removed from service if a single car or power unit needs repair. Therefore far more equipment will be necessary to protect service with this type of train. What is needed is a car that can be operated as a 60-seat coach for short distance daytime trips, a 48-seat leg rest coach for long distance and over-night trips, or as a parlor car. What is needed is a car that can serve as a diner, lounge, dome or skyview, kitchen and snack bar. What is needed is a huge fleet of 24-8 Slumbercoaches as we now know them. What is needed is a 10-bedroom (with bathtub) for first class passengers offered at a premium price. What is needed is a Baggage Dormitory with sufficient space for the crew to sleep, lounge, do bookkeeping, and to get away from the passengers and their job during the trip. How about this--only FIVE different types of cars to serve all the needs of U.S. passenger train service. Such cars can be placed into service with existing equipment without disturbing the continuity of the train. Dome cars, an excellent selling tool, can be utilized when possible and skyview cars can be used in the east. This gives management the flexibility to gear the trains to the patron demand. It makes car assignment. train consists, and car repairs much easier.

Coach seats could be on "tracks" and adjusted quickly for the type of service desired. Instead of the familiar swivel chair in the parlor car, only one of the two adjacent seats could be sold, giving the first class passenger some advantage over his coach counterpart. Even a single car could be separated between coach and first class by the use of a curtain.

The diner lounge could be designed with settees similar to the SCL-ACL cars. In one end of the kitchen could be a small snack bar. This car could be used as a lounge at non-meal times.

The slumbercoach I propose is what we have now. I would add carpeting, but remove the bedding. It would give the passenger privacy and ability to lie flat but with bedding optional at an extra charge.

The full sleeper would be similar to a conventional bedroom car with the addition of a small bathtub to each room--therefore only 10 units per car. The price would be double the coach fare, and many amenities could be included. I suggest a small crib be available for infants.

The baggage dormitory would be for all personnel, not just the dining car crew. Everyone enjoys that coffee break, and there should be a place on the train for the crew to relax..Also included would be an office for the Conductor and Amtrak people to do paperwork.

I offer this as a suggestion to Amtrak for the multitude of plans now on the drawing board. Right now Amtrak is planning four different types of trains: Metroliner, Turbo, low level for Eastern, and hi-level for Western trains. NONE of which will be compatible! AND within each type there is the complement of diners, lounges, parlors, coaches, sleepers, snack cars, etc. What I offer is a standard car with only five types of accommodations. This would make the job of running and making up trains much easier. It would take far fewer cars than now planned and therefore the capital expenditure would be less.

The problem of too many exotic trains has been bothering DOT, and perhaps if Amtrak came back down to earth in their long range equipment plans, they would get more co-operation from them.

Dave Randall

Alton, Illinois

(continued on page 18)

* second issue of June, 1974.

# Railway Passenger Car Annual



## Volume 1 1973-1974

Contains car by car rosters of all rail passenger cars in revenue service on the U.S. and Canadian Railroads and Transit Systems during 1973.

Each car is listed in numerical order under the owning railroad or Transit Authority for easy identification. Prior numbers, ownership, rebuilding, builder and date built are shown.

Includes all Intercity and Commuter passenger cars owned by: Alaska Railroad, Amtrak, Autoliner, Autotrain, Boston & Maine, British Columbia, Burlington Northern, Canadian National (Including GO Transit), Canadian Pacific, Central of New Jersey, Chessie System, The Milwaukee Road, Chicago & North Western, Rock Island, Chicago South Shore & South Bend, Denver & Rio Grande Western, Erie Lackawanna, Georgia, Illinois Central Gulf, Long Island, Norfolk and Western, Ontario Northland, Penn Central, Pennsylvania Reading Seashore Lines, Pittsburgh & Lake Erie, Reading, Southern, Southern Pacific, and Union Pacific. All Penn Central and Amtrak cars are cross indexed to prior number since they haven't been fully renumbered. Indicates cars owned by NJDOT, MTA, and SEPTA.

Includes all Rapid Transit and Streetcars owned by: MBTA (Boston), NYCTA (New York), SIRT (Staten Island), PATH (New York), TofNJ (Newark), PATCO (Philadelphia), SEPTA (Including Red Arrow), PAT (Pittsburgh), CTS (Cleveland), SHRT (Shaker Heights, Ohio), CTA (Chicago), NOPS (New Orleans), Leonard's Dept. Store (Ft. Worth), El Paso City Lines, BART, and San Francisco's MUNI (including Cable Cars), MUCTC (Montreal), Expo Express, and the TTC (Toronto). Also includes the Seattle Alweg Monorail.

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## LEWIS RE-ELECTED AMTRAK PRESIDENT -- NEW "OPERATING OFFICER" CONSIDERED

Amtrak announced July 23 that its Board of Directors had re-elected Roger Lewis as chairman and president. However, the Board also decided to consider at its next meeting the organization of a committee to study the role of a Chief Operating Officer for Amtrak. This move appears to be a compromise between scuttling the heavily-criticized Lewis in favor of a railroad man with more train experience and maintaining the status quo.

It was reported in the Eastern press shortly before this week's board meeting that Amtrak was seeking a new president and had asked Mr. Paul H. Reistrup, a senior vice president - Traffic with Illinois Central Gulf Railroad to be Amtrak's next president. An unconfirmed report has it that Reistrup turned down the job. Speculation is that Reistrup might be available for the job of Chief Operating Officer with Lewis retaining the position of President. Reistrup, 42, was earlier in passenger service with the B&O. He was quoted in The Washington Post (July 18) as saying that "I like transportation, and railroads in particular, and I like people. The passenger business is awfully difficult, a real challeng." He is currently the head of freight marketing for the ICG.

Amtrak board meetings are ordinarily scheduled for the third Thursday of each month, in which case the matter of a new person to handle Amtrak's operations would come up on August 15.

## AMTRAK ANNOUNCES NEW LOS ANGELES-LAS VEGAS SERVICE

The announcement came on July 16 that Amtrak has finalized an agreement with Las Vegas Charter Service, Inc. of Las Vegas, NV to run a LAS VEGAS CELEBRITY TRAIN between L.A. and the Nevada city 2-3 times weekly beginning September 20. Head of the Service is Jack Melvin of Las Vegas, a public relations man who plans to have a major entertainer (Milton Berle is rumored as the first) aboard each train to please passengers who sign up for the package tours, somewhat similar to the RENO FUN TRAIN trips. No government funds are involved in the venture, and the Service guarantees Amtrak at least 400 passengers per trip. The train will use equipment from the SUNSET LIMITED which otherwise lays over in Los Angeles between its tri-weekly trips. The new train will run on Fridays, Sundays and some Wednesdays thru April 27, except for the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's holidays.

## DETROIT-BUFFALO SERVICE TO BE INAUGURATED

The states of New York and Michigan have agreed to help finance an extension of Amtrak's New York-Buffalo "Empire Service" thru to Detroit via Toronto on the north shore of Lake Erie. No startup time or other service details are available now. Since the run would involve Canadian lines as well, presumably some negotiations with Canada are necessary before service commences.

## DOT APPROVES PURCHASE OF 7 TURBOLINERS FOR AMTRAK

In an announcement this week, the DOT has approved purchase by Amtrak of 7--less than the 14 Amtrak asked for--French-type Turboliners to be built at Rohr Corporation's plant in Winder, GA. The trains are to be ready for initial delivery late in 1975 or early 1976. DOT secretary Brinegar said that his department cut Amtrak's request in half because 14 exceeded the likely market as his agency saw it, and that low-cost conventional trains should be continued rather than all premium-fare Turbos (however, Turbos in the Northeast Corridor, where these trains will be used, are not premium-fare trains). The 7 trains are in addition to the 6 French-built trains ordered earlier for the Mdwest. Rohr's Winder, GA plant also builds cars for the Washington DC subway now under construction.

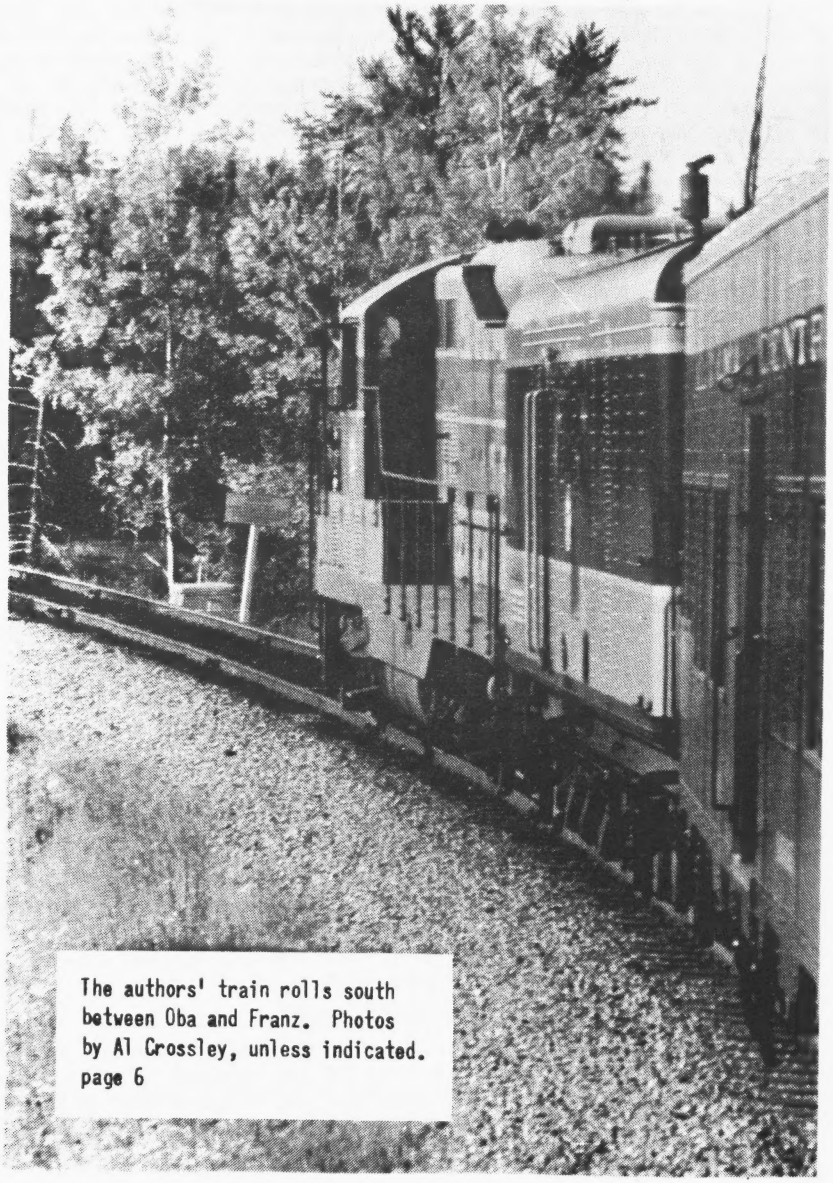
## DOT'S ANNUAL REPORT DELAYS DEBATE ON AMTRAK'S FINANCES

The DOT annual report has just been released (we have not yet seen it), and the Wall Street Journal (July 23) reports that the DOT has requested subsidies to Amtrak to continue, postponing for a year the question of Amtrak's dependence on the Federal government for funding, and possible changes in methods of financing deficits.

# ALGOMA CENTRAL

by Alan Crossley and Thomas Durkin

RAIL TRAVELERS PLANNING AUTUMN TRIPS INTO THE COLORFUL FOLIAGE COUNTRY MAY WISH TO CONSIDER THE ADVENTURES OF THESE TWO FANS--WHOSE WRITING IS NEW TO THESE PAGES--WHO RODE LAST FALL ON THE ALGOMA CENTRAL RAILWAY, ONTARIO



The authors' train rolls south between Oba and Franz. Photos by Al Crossley, unless indicated.
page 6

"Passenger traffic," said the voice on the line when we finally reached the Algoma Central Railway in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. Ah, so the ACR does have a separate passenger office--or at least a separate phone. Service to Hearst, Ontario? Daily through October 13, weekends after that. Reservations necessary? No, not to Hearst. Fare? $35.50 return (round trip). We hadn't learned much more than that by the early October evening when the three of us hit downtown Sault Ste. Marie (The Soo) for our first look at little Algoma Central.

Little Algoma Central? With acres of cars in the station lot? With a spanking new depot (separate phone indeed!)? With the daily train of--good heavens!--20 cars just letting off the last of its passengers? Little? Stop, look, and listen, Amtrak--this operation's in Run 8!

Our enthusiasm ill-concealed, we went into the station for our tickets and were met by green handouts on the counter reading, "Sorry, our regular Agawa Canyon train is now sold out." There was an anxious pause as we read on about a second train which could accommodate an additional 600 people (the first handled 840). But when we asked about space to Hearst, we were relieved to find that the sheet did not apply to us and that seats on the regular train were indeed available. The scheme of things suddenly took shape. Most of the train we had seen was a tour which went only to Canyon, 114 miles northwest of The Soo, as part of #1, the daily Hearst train, and came back with #2 the same day (the trip to Hearst, 296 miles to the north, covers two days). The reduced-fare tour was often sold out a day in advance, and a second section was then run for the overflow.

The ACR took no credit cards, only cash, for our tickets, but they did take U.S. funds at par, though Canadian dollars were valued slightly more at the time. They also offered to make free reservations for us in Hearst; we accepted and had a room (and a picture postcard of the motel) in 30 seconds.

We returned later that evening to watch the day's second tour section pull in ten minutes late with two engines and twelve cars. All nine coaches were filled, and the departing crowd created a short-lived traffic jam. Tourist line perhaps, but the Algoma Central was doing something right and we eagerly awaited our trip.

Motel rooms were scarce that night, thanks no doubt to the ACR, but we found one not too far out of town. The first train, due out at 8am, was to be ready for boarding at 7:00, and the cars had just been spotted in front of the station when we pulled up the next morning at 6:50. The station announcer was reminding the gathering throng that this train was sold out but that seats were still left on the second section. We boarded precisely at 7:00, parked our bags and coats across from the conductor's table in the Hearst coach, then set about examining the quarter-mile consist. ACR's GP-7s have no boilers, so a steam generator--ours was a rebuilt tender, was working hard on the head end to keep the 800-plus tourists warm on this damp, gray morning. One of the road's several ex-troop carriers, its windows still in place, was our lead baggage car. The second baggage car was of clerestory vintage, and pigeon holes inside suggested one-time RPO service (Nos. 1 and 2 do carry mail, but no cancelling is done en route). Behind this car were the through coach to Hearst (coach A), coaches 1-7 of the Canyon Tour, two diners, and tour coaches 8-14.

Most of ACR's coaches, including all on Nos. 1 and 2 and the first tour, are streamlined, air-conditioned cars built by CP's Angus shops and acquired by Algoma Central a few years ago. Each carries 68 people in reclining seats which can still be swivelled 180° (fortunate, as the cars can't be turned at Canyon). The second tour section, however (and the green handouts give fair warning of this), uses older cars with somewhat more primitive air conditioning (sliding windows) and the train runs a cafe car instead of a full diner. Except for a few streamlined cars which bear a kind of silver mist (more metallic than Amtrak's), ACR passenger equipment is solid maroon with silver roofing. The sides of our train had apparently been washed for the day's trip. Car interiors, except for one attractively repainted and reupholstered coach, showed considerable mileage, but they too were clean, and a litter bag was taped to the wall at every pair of seats.

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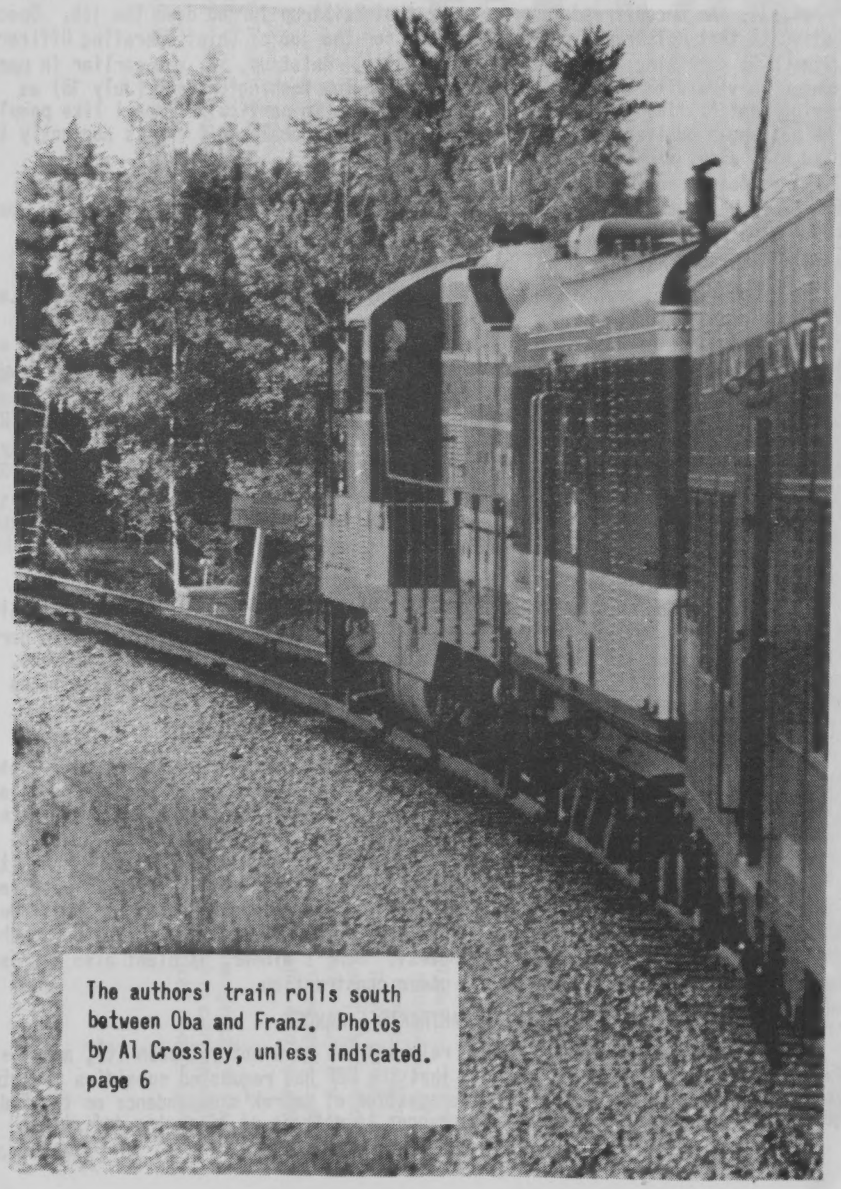

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It seems the crew had trouble getting air through the signal line, though we had to ask the conductor about it--no one explained or apologized for the delay over the train's P.A. system. Perhaps no one minded because we were giving the clouds an extra half hour to break up (they didn't) or perhaps because everyone sensed that for once there was simply no reason to hurry.

We rumbled out of town through ACR's coach yard, eye-catching for its four Ontario Northland POLAR BEAR EXPRESS-GO transit cars, a couple of ex-Rio Grande head end cars, and an orange and brown ex-IC car. The American equipment had apparently been bought by the ACR, but we never determined whether the POLAR BEAR cars had been bought, borrowed or leased.

Any disappointment over the somber skies was quickly burned off by the sizzling foliage as we left the city--we had hit the fall colors at their peak. The dazzling view from Belleview Trestle, 19 miles out--a broad valley afire in brilliant reds and oranges and spiked by an open network of tall evergreens--turned out to be only a playful flicker compared with the coming miles to Canyon.

Soon after our departure, calls for breakfast came over the P.A. (also used by the tour hostess to indicate points of interest). As full-fare, long distance passengers (more to the point, hungry passengers) we hoped our car would be the first called, but no such luck--the coaches were called by number from the diners outward and ours was last, an hour out of The Soo. Coupled kitchen-to-kitchen, each diner served half the train and both were to come off at Canyon, meaning no on-board food service to Hearst. While older than the rest of the cars, they had been redone inside with wood paneling. ACR ran them like restaurants--instead of waiters, we had waitresses who took verbal rather than written orders, and customers paid at a cashier's booth--souvenir stand on the way out. Table flowers were plastic (placed in water nonetheless), there were no tablecloths the napkins were paper--in short, no pretensions--and the door to the noisy vestibule was left open in our car. But the service was prompt and friendly, the food was good, and the prices were reasonable, so we had no complaints. Box lunches were being offered in our coach when we got back, and thinking ahead beyond Canyon to an eat-less #1, we opted for them. $1.95 bought two sandwiches, cheese and crackers, bean salad, sweet roll and an orange. The sandwiches weren't exactly gourmet treats, but they kept the hungries away that afternoon.

The crew wasn't chasing anyone off the vestibules, so after buying our lunches, we grabbed our coats, tugged open some Dutch doors, and started enjoying the brisk Ontario air. Up ahead the four Geeps made a no-nonsense attack on the line's grades and numerous reverse curves while our train twisted endlessly away to the rear--an impressive sight. Those curves kept the speed at 45 mph or less, but what of it? The windchill was tolerable that way and there was more time to enjoy the colorful Algoma country. In fact, with a long train, bright foliage, and traps under our feet, things couldn't have been much better, could they? They could indeed!

we finally rolled into the sunshine some two and a half hours from The Soo, and this, combined with somewhat chunkier landscape, displayed the brilliant trees to even better effect. The vestibules--or, as we dubbed them for lack of a dome, "vistabules"--soom became more popular with the passengers, especially as the air became warm. But things really started to open up as we approaced Frater and the highest point on the line. At mile 92 we crossed the Montreal River practically on top of a power dam and the view upriver was as long and flowing as the drop over the dam was sudden and dramatic. The train, meanwhile, put on its own show, stretching out slowly along 1000 feet of curved trestle, and we found ourselves aching to look three ways at once but having to pick one, hoping to see the rest on the way back.

The rails climbed upstream along the river's north bank until the trestle reappeared as a tiny Erector-set bridge thrown across a far-away valley, then swung north into the mountains. Soon the solid, deep blue of Lake Superior's Agawa Bay struck deeply into the forests far below, with Montreal Island floating offshore...and Highway 17 running nearby. Except for the road, one could have been gazing on an uncharted sea--there was no other reason to suspect man's presence.

At last the 500 foot deep Agawa River canyon dropped steeply away on the left, and everyone's eyes plunged down with it. Beautiful as the canyon would have looked otherwise, in its near-electric fall colors it was too gorgeous to be true, and our lofty view of it was over much too soon; a few short miles later we had come down to the river's edge and were slowing for Canyon. What a perfect way to see this fascinating part of Canada!

The schedule allows the tour passengers just under two hours at Canyon between the time their train is dropped by #1 and picked up by #2. The stop is in a narrow part of the canyon with steep rock walls and high waterfalls splashing down on either side of the river. It's a delightful setting, and two lookout trails let passengers make the most of it. Picnic and play areas line the tracks. Unfortunately, no visiting time is allotted for the first class passengers--the section for Hearst is on its way as soon as the tour cars are uncoupled. (You can, of course, travel first class to Canyon and back, getting the same layover as the other tourists.)

(continued on page 13)



# *Urban-Suburban Transit*

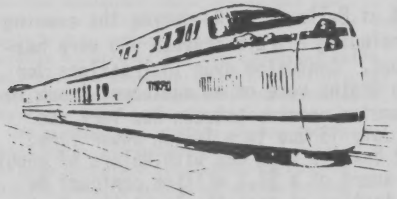
Two Erie Lackawanna commuter trains collided at Belleville, NJ during the evening rush hour of July 8, injuring 29 persons, including 2 train crewmen who were hospitalized overnight. No injuries were serious. Confusion over instructions for switching were blamed as the cause. The two trains were on an eastbound track in opposite directions... All Penn Central commuter service between New York and Stamford, CT was stopped at about 8:30pm on July 19 due to a fallen power line. Service resumed on the New Haven Division at 8am the next day with delays of about 10 minutes... The DOT announced July 18 an award of a $2.1 million contract to Ford Motor Co. for design, construction and testing of magnetic levitation trains. The 16-month project will compare two types of maglev trains: those that sit on a cushion and those that hang from an overhead rail. A 3280-foot guideway will be built at China Lake, CA for the testing. Said Sec'y Brinegar: "...magnetically levitated vehicles could be a real breakthrough for the very high speed movement of people thru the country's densely populated urban corridors... It would be pollution-free, and at 300mph it could make the run between Washington and Boston in 1½ hours"... Last year there were 125,156,876 motor vehicles registered in the U.S., up 6,530,686 from 1972. And the Senate is warning about driving those vehicles too much this summer or we'll have a gasoline shortage again. It said the tightest situation would likely be on the West Coast... The death toll for the 4-day Fourth of July weekend was 519, compared with 758 in a comparable period in 1972. This reduction was attributed primarily to the reduced 55-mph speed limit...

AUTO-TRAIN ANNOUNCES NEW SCHEDULE

In a July 10 press release, Auto-Train Corporation announced schedule changes on all routes effective July 15. Trains which run daily between Lorton, VA and Sanford, FL will now depart from each end at 6pm rather than 4pm and will arrive the next day at 9:30am. Departure times from Louisville, KY have been changed to 3:30 pm (CDT) instead of 5:30, with a Sanford arrival the next day at 2:30 (EDT). The other direction, trains leave Sanford at 12:30pm instead of 12 noon and arrive Louisville at 9:30am. Auto-Train said it has carried over 530,000 passengers and 195,000 automobiles since its inception. It will institute daily service on the Louisville-Sanford route early in 1975. In other news, Auto-Train announced that as of July 10, common shares of A-T stock will be traded on the American Stock Exchange. The new symbol for the company will be ATC.

FOR THE FIRST time in the lives of most Americans, a steam-powered passenger train will be pictured on a U.S. stamp--a commemoration of introduction of winter wheat into Kansas, one in the "Rural America" series to be released the first time at Hillsboro, Kansas on August 16..... A FEDERAL COURT in Washington issued a temporary restraining order earlier this month to prevent the RF&P Railroad from refusing to handle Amtrak trains into Washington Union Station. The railroad threatened the action because of a money dispute over use of the terminal. The judge set July 22 to hear the case, but commented that it might better be a case for the ICC to decide..... THE ICC HAS issued a decree (July 19) changing the wording in its "Adequacy of Intercity Rail Passenger Service" standards to make it easier and faster for affected parties to obtain relief from violations of the standards. It said it was promulgating the changes on short notice because of the "increasing number of complaints received from travelers alleging violations of the regulations for the adequacy of intercity rail passenger service"..... REVIVAL OF THE former San Francisco-Monterey, CA DEL MONTE is moving along. An Amtrak study found that the run may be economically feasible and suggested that the 5 counties involved split the $195,000 yearly projected operating deficit. The study said that weekend and holiday service to both Monterey and Santa Cruz via Watsonville may be practical. Estimated S.F.-Monterey fare: $9.87.....

# Adieu, Turbo



## SPACE AGE
HIGH SPEED GROUND TRANSPORTATION

On its first arrival in the deepening twilight of the evening of August 25, 1971 in Oakland, CA a large crowd gathered to see the touring Turbo, which went on display the following day (photo by Message Media).

Below, the POTOMAC TURBO on February 26, 1971, has just crossed Cranberry Grade at Oakland, MD, and is about to descend for 17 miles thru the snow. Said an Associated Press report at the time, "one of the only 2 Turbo Trains in the United States--designed for speeds of up to 170mph--labored over the West Virginia mountains for 8hrs --at 15mph--one recent night to deposit 3 passengers in Parkersburg, WV. It was a typical run." Photo by Doug Ellis.

The beginning of the end of the American TurboTrain era came earlier this month when Gerald J. Tobias, division president of Sikorsky Aircraft Division of United Aircraft formally announced that his company is "phasing out" its Surface Transportation Systems activities. Apparently the major reason for the decision to drop the UA TurboTrain was the purchase by Amtrak of French-designed Turboliners of more reliable quality. Amtrak recently got approval to buy 6 of the French models, but it was learned that United Aircraft had not bid on that order, apparently being unable to supply 6 trains in the short time limit asked for by Amtrak. UA has recently been pushing a newer model of the Turbo, known as TurboTrain II (it has not been learned how this differs from the existing Turbo), but this will be given up.

UA Turbos have been running in the Northeast Corridor since April, 1969, and have been the subject of controversy, some of which has surfaced in recent issues of this newsletter. Last summer a Canadian National Turbo was in an accident which set off a fire, demolishing the lightweight vehicle. This incident virtually killed Amtrak's interest in the trains--the corporation was about to purchase the trainset along with one other from CN to test in the Midwest in conjunction with the French models. The rail corporation did obtain the second trainset for the Northeast Corridor, but since that time the French trains have established such a record of reliability on the Chicago-St. Louis route that that factor alone made it obvious that the American model was out of the competition.

Meanwhile, Canadian National made alterations in their unreliable Turbos and at last seemed to have set them running without problems. CN runs Turbos between Toronto and Montreal under lease from United Aircraft of Canada, Ltd.

UA had 25 employees working on the Turbo project at the time of the discontinuance announcement. UA built the aircraft-type turbine engines for the trains, but put together only 4 of the cars, according to the Wall Street Journal. Two of the existing trains were assembled by Pullman-Standard and give by the Montreal Locomotive Works.

In the first summer after Amtrak's takeover in 1971, one TurboTrain was sent on a publicity tour of the United States in an attempt to arouse interest in rail travel and in the new technology. The tour was generally a success, despite several incidents, including the Turbo's running out of fuel on SP's Shasta Route, and despite the blatant efforts by some railroad management to deny the public access to the train. The first Amtrak "fiasco" involving the Turbo was the initiation of the POTOMAC TURBO on February 7, 1972, when Amtrak, at the urging of Congressman Harley Staggers of West Virginia, placed a Turbo on the mountainous and lightly-populated Washington DC to Parkersburg WV run for a 6-month trial--a trial that was deemed unsuccessful later when conventional equipment was substituted. After many weeks the otherwise unobservant media discovered this "wasteful" deployment of the Turbo and it became a national scandal overnight in newspaper headlines.

Below, the "winner" in the Turbo race--the French-designed Turboliner, shot at Bloomington, IL this month by Jack Ferry, as the engineer stopped to wipe his windshield. Amtrak awarded an $18 million contract last month to the French maker to purchase this and 5 other Turboliners. Later trains will come as empty shells to be outfitted by Amtrak with its own seats and other appointments.

In announcing the new move, UA said it will continue to appraise the market for new trains in this country, leaving the door open for possibly getting back into production if Amtrak is interested. UA said that if it got the upcoming order for 14 more trains it could profitably produce them, but the order for 6 on which it did not bid would have been inadequate for any return.

Members of Congress expressed concern over the action, urging UA to reconsider, and saying it had made a mistake in leaving the field.

# canadian news letter

THE EFFECT UPON Canada's TurboTrains of United Aircraft's decision this month to get out of the ground transportation field cannot be assessed yet. It is known that CN recently spoke of increased use of the Turbo to meet rising passenger demands, and CN seemed at long last to have gotten the bugs out of its UA Turbos. But now the trains will no longer be manufactured, unless some source, such as Amtrak or the talked-about Canadian corporation to take over passenger service, should decide to invest a large sum in the turbine equipment.

A more likelyevent, say reports from here, is that the LRC (Light, Rapid, Comfortable) train will become the new baby on passenger-heavy corridor routes. At least the manufacturer, MLW Worthington Ltd. of Montreal, hopes that will be the case. The streamlined diesel train has been under development here for 7 years, with a modest $2.5 million government subsidy. This fall, the train is to be placed into revenue service on an unnamed line, with the manufacturer footing the bill as a demonstration piece.

Prime Minister Trudeau's plans for transportation outlays call for about $500 million for the first 5 years of his program. In the first two years, plans would be be made for introducing high-speed trains on intercity routes similar to those now handled by Turbo trains. This would be a logical place for the LRC to enter the picture.

Besides MLW Worthington, two other manufacturers team up to produce the train: Alcan Aluminum Ltd. designs the coaches and supplies material; and Dominion Foundries and Steel Ltd. builds the trucks.

BRITISH COLUMBIA RAILWAY'S summer steam train excursions from North Vancouver to Squamish are now running Wednesday-Sunday and on holidays to Sept. 2. The train is called the ROYAL HUDSON, and carries vintage coaches along the scenic route. The train is sold out days in advance, and prospective riders may call 987-4411 in North Vancouver for reservations which must be picked up there by noon of the previous day. We hope to have more on this train in the next issue.

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NEW STATIONS ANNOUNCED BY AMTRAK

Amtrak announced this month that it will start construction of a new Richmond, VA station in September. The new 4.2-acre site is 3 miles north of the present Broad Street Station, which will be retained by the state as an historical landmark and office building.

Beginning July 31, train service in Houston, TX will be consolidated into the SP station, now used by the SUNSET (the LONE STAR uses the ATSF station). The consolidated terminal at 902 Washington Avenue will be expanded. Amtrak said that passengers need no longer change stations when changing trains in Houston.

AMTRAK HAS INFORMED employees that effective July 1, the following credit cards are to be honored "in all dining and food service cars on long-haul trains": Master Charge, American Express, BankAmericard, Carte Blanche and Diners Club. This was to occur with the elimination of the Rail Travel Card..... NATIONAL PARK RANGERS are riding the EMPIRE BUILDER daily from June 15-August 15 to give passengers a commentary in the lounge car on Glacier National Park..... THE WALL STREET Journal reports that trips to national parks are down this year because of the high costs of travel. Las Vegas reports likewise. Time to build new rail lines to national parks and promote travel to those now on train routes, as one senator suggests..... THE COMING BOSTON-Chicago train will reportedly have a thru coach, thru sleeper and food service car to Boston, while most of the train goes to New York..... BACK IN SERVICE is SR car 1602, the dome parlor involved in the recent SOUTHERN CRESCENT wreck. It's been repaired, refurbished and repainted. The sleeper "Luther Calvin Norris" will be scrapped..... AMTRAK RECENTLY RAN a "hospital train," a string of 20 bad-ordered cars (on July 13) from Chicago to Beech Grove shops--including diners, coaches, lounges, sleepers, dome sleepers, dome coaches. Did anyone photograph the train?.....



(continued from page 8)

The steam generator, baggage cars, and coach going to Hearst require only one engine, but to save the time and labor needed to run the other three around the tour train, all four go to Tabor, 27 miles beyond Canyon, where #1 and #2 have to meet anyway and the swap can be made more efficiently (it also means that the tour passengers can detrain right away at Canyon without having to worry about being running over by three Geeps). So for a time, we were charging along with a power-to-tonnage ratio which would have turned anyone else's operating department pale. But what acceleration--we were just about back on schedule when we got to Tabor. Our four units took the facing-point siding so that #2's locomotive could couple onto the rearmost three--these three are always switched as a block to avoid making the crews change cabs. We lost a couple of minutes again, but the change was soon complete and we were underway with considerably less overkill up front.

North of Canyon, the ACR seems a different railroad. The long, heavy train is gone, of course, and the first-time passengers notice that the rugged terrain (and in early October the riotous autumn coloring) is subdued, though still quite pretty. But it is left to the railfan to delight in the operation of a pre-Detroit era local. There aren't many left, but Nos. 1 and 2 still seem to provide a much-needed and appreciated service to Ontario's semi-frontier. The line has six intermediate station stops and 13 flag stops, and usually someone is waiting to board or detrain at each.

Explorers and hunters make liberal use of ACR baggage cars (there's a 150 lb. baggage limit per adult ticket, and piece over 250 lbs. must be carried as freight). Boats, paddles, motors, gas cans, guns, supplies and even moose meat were all taken aboard during our trip, to be handed down to their owners in remote places like Anjigami, Mongoose, and Mileage 93. Royal Mail, meanwhile, is picked up "on the fly" --all an Algoma resident need do is take his letter to the nearest flagstop, tie it around a stick (optional), and toss it aboard as the train clunks slowly past. Delivery? We were rolling through Eton at 35 mph when a newspaper came soaring out of the baggage car, landing--bullseye! squarely on the steps of a nearby house. If such service was altogether natural in this setting, it was nevertheless great fun to watch in 1973.

Though we were 500 miles northeast of Chicago, the air was still so warm and pleasant that we stayed for many miles on the vestibule. On board the atmosphere was relaxed and engaging. The tourists talked busily on while most of the hunters, for lack of seats, moved ahead to the unofficial club car to ride with their baggage and have one or two rounds.

The crew went about its work casually but not carelessly, and seldom were there any hitches in the operation. At the Wabatong flag stop, however, there were some passengers waiting where apparently none was expected, and we came gunning around the curve to see one of them standing on the track, waving the flag over his head in earnest. He jumped clear and we stopped, but not before we overshot and had to back up.

Nos. 1 and 2 both stop at Hawk Jct., where a freight-only branch runs to Lake Superior; and Oba, where ACR rails cross CN's main line, and there's a small store near each station where passengers restock their provisions. The train brings mail as well as hungry passengers, and its arrival still seems as important to these communities as it once was in many American towns; train time generates a nostalgia which even the artifice of tourism can't erase.

The track straightens out considerably after Oba, and the forest and muskeg country the rest of the way to Hearst is pretty flat, so we sat down to talk to the conductor for a while. We were about five minutes too soon. The engineer suddenly jerked the whistle cord several times, and the conductor quickly turned to the window. "Moose," he told us, and we all strained to see something in the brush, but it was gone.

Algoma Central track ends a mile out of Hearst, so we took the east leg of the wye at Hearst Jct. to ride CN rails into the depot, arriving two minutes behind our 10 1/2-hour schedule. An old CN combine, apparently part of the Tuesday and Thursday Hearst-Nakina mixed, CN #273, sat nearby.

We learned the hard way that in spite of our reservations, motel rooms were handed out first come-first served--our motel was the one nearest the station (about 350 feet away) and quite a few passengers without reservations beat us to it. Several hotels and motels line Front Street, which parallels the CN, so getting a place to stay, out of season anyway, is no trouble. Hearst is largely a tourist town on the Trans-Canada Highway, which explains all the accommodations, but there is also lumber-related industry, accounting for the burnt-sawdust smell and smoky haze which permeate the town (so much for the northern lights, which we had hoped to see). A surprise was the strong French-Canadian influence so far west. Many of the residents are bi-lingual, though they seem most comfortable speaking French among themselves. We had no language problems. American money is accepted in Hearst, but we got some Canadian in change, unlike the ACR diner, for example, where ample U.S. currency is available.

We got up early enough the next morning to eat breakfast in town. The train had

been parked near the station for the night and was backed in unchanged as #2. Our old friend left on time at 7:45 and backed down the CN to the wye, where we headed south with the same passengers, the same crew, and the same trash in the litter bags as on the previous day. Crews on the Algoma Central work straight through from The Soo to Hearst and back, head end crews working two days and getting two off, with the conductors, brakemen, and baggagemen going four on and four off. Our crew had stayed the night in the station.

Having heard a rumor that ACR passengers were allowed cab rides, we had asked our conductor about it before getting off at Hearst. He had made no promises, but sure enough, soon after we hit the vestibule southbound he came by. Would we like to go up front now? You bet we would! The train had just stopped, so our parade through the baggage cars and steam generator to the gangway was easily and safely accomplished (we didn't find out until late that the conductor had stretched the rules for us--cab rides are not ACR policy, at least not without a release.)

The power plant seemed ready to come right through the back wall as the engineer--dressed in the best tradition in blue coveralls and cap--gradually gave the throttle all eight notches for our getaway. Most of the time, however, we ran two or three positions and several decibels lower. No. 156's cab had plenty of room, if not enough handholds, for three standees (there was also an extra seat behind the fireman), so we were able to keep pretty much out of the crew's way. Rags were stuffed in and around seams and joints as if to keep the aging unit's circulation intact for one more mile, but the Geep was certainly having no trouble with this train. Left in Run 6 for one stretch, it got us rolling at 55 mph, the fastest we ever went, or of course ever needed to go. Even at that speed, the engine seemed to ride pretty well.

A dark shape suddenly appeared down the track close to the right-of-way. "Looking right at us, " called the fireman, "another moose." We bore down on him and he disinterestedly turned and started to trot off, but a series of sharp pulls on the horn sent him slashing through the evergreen and out of sight. He was a magnificent animal and unfortunately the only one we saw.

After the cab ride and the moose, although the rest of the ride was as enjoyable as the trip north had been, the excitement of things new was over. We rode the locomotive until Oba, and thanked the engineer, fireman, and conductor as best we knew how. Then it was back to the coach until Sault Ste. Marie. There was only one slight incident the rest of the way. The conductor had apparently forgotten to warn a particular couple that Franz was coming up, and as we slowly pulled away they appeared on the vestibule, speaking French but making it perfectly clear they wanted off. A fellow passenger found the conductor in the baggage car and he stopped us again very quickly with a couple of yanks on the signal cord, but his English apology, though profuse, seemed less effective.

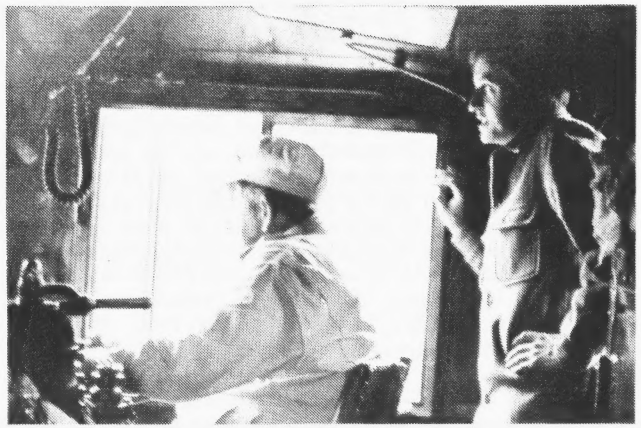
We had to wait about 20 minutes at Tabor for #1 so the engineer cut off his unit and pulled it up a few yards to the pond where he and the crew customarily tossed bread crumbs to the fish when the northbound was late. At length we got our engines and became once again the Superpower Special. The second tour train met us at Canyon with the POLAR BEAR and ex-IC cars in its consist as well as the usual older cars. We left as soon as it cleared the south switch. Company officials, in business car "Agawa," had ridden to Canyon with #1 and were coming back with us, but they would be over a quarter-mile away at the end of the train, so that if they felt differently from the crew about vestibule riding we'd never know it. All up and down the train, in fact, the vestibules sported faces of tour passengers who had discovered them on the way north.

No. 2 arrived about ten minutes late at Sault Ste. Marie because of our delayed meet with #1. We changed our money at the station and jumped in the car, getting a last look at our train as a switcher made ready to pull it away. A quick dash across the international bridge got us back to the States ahead of the other tourists, and our Algoma Central adventure was over.

If you'd like to make a one-way trip (the fare is $17.75), we recommend travelling south to more fully appreciate the scenery north of Canyon. Hearst can be reached by bus from both Montreal and Toronto, and of course by CN #272 from Nakina. Unassuming Algoma Central also connects with both of the grander-but-fading-fast Canadian transcons--with the CANADIAN at Franz and with the SUPER CONTINENTAL at Oba--so if you're planning a trip on either of them a side trip to the Soo could be fun. Find out about accommodations first, though; we saw one small hotel in Oba, but Franz is a question mark. The ACR should be able to answer any of your questions if you write Algoma Central Railway, Passenger Sales Centre, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, or call 705-254-4331. We think this is a rail trip not to be missed.



At right, author Al Crossley looks over the engineer's shoulder in the cab of ACR GP7 #156, leading train 2 south. Photo: Tom Durkin.



Combined train #1 and Agawa Canyon Tour, with four GP units pulling, moves north a few miles south of Montreal River Trestle in early October, 1973.

## QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Much of the trackage over which Amtrak's trains must run is literally dangerous; most of it is old and rough, at best; many routes have duplicating tracks; and many are not as direct as they would be if they had been built to serve contemporary needs. The fact is that no major intercity rail line has been built in America since the nineteen-twenties. As the railroads have declined, moreover, they have not kept the existing trackage in the best condition. This is a limitation on Amtrak service that Amtrak alone cannot meet; and most of the freight carriers can't either."

--Tom Wicker in New York Times, July 21

"I don't see taking gasoline tax money and using it to subsidize the fare box for operating expenses. It should be part of the general tax burden."

--General Motors VP-Finance, Oscar A. Lundin giving his position on use of highway funds for rapid transit, New York Times, July 21

# *mixed train of thoughts*

THE REVIVED LAURENTIAN, or LAURENTIDE, as one Amtrak spokesman calls it, between New York and Montreal will probably get running before August 15. It will operate out of New York's Grand Central Station, and its equipment will include a CP Skyline Dome coffee shop coach between Montreal and Albany. At Albany the train reportedly will combine with the EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS. Eight coaches, 2 diners and 2 baggage cars for the new train are now in Hoover Shops in Miami for refurbishing. D&H's 4 well-liked Alco PA engines will power the train--they're now being rebuilt at Morrison-Knudsen in Boise, Idaho..... PASSENGERS ABANDONED THE northbound CHAMPION en masse at Savannah, GA on July 17 because 7 cars had no air conditioning. Amtrak arranged air and bus transportation for them. We're getting other horror stories of air conditioning lack in the summer heat: the eastbound NATIONAL LIMITED on July 9 saw the AC fail in half the cars--a diner and 2 coaches, so passengers had to double up in the remaining 3 coaches between Kansas City and St. Louis. At St. Louis about 190 passengers had to detrain and wait in the hot, muggy trainshed which air conditioning units were worked on. They'd had no food, since the hot diner closed, and when passengers reached St. Louis at 5pm they found that the depot restaurant had closed 30 minutes earlier. Sounds just like before Amtrak, doesn't it. As the French say, La plus ca change, la plus c'est la meme chose. An ICC representative happened to be at St. Louis when this occurred, and he will write a report on it.....

* * *

THE NATIONAL LIMITED again? Yes, our next item in hand is about that train on July 14--5 days later. Passengers waited at Kirkwood, MO for the train which pulled in 4 hours late. But when train 31 arrived, the conductor stepped out and announced, "Sorry, folks, but we have no air conditioning on the train." At that, a handful of people picked up their bags and said "Forget it!" How to use our tax money to turn away passengers. But just wait till next summer--we'll have a chance to get organized..... AMTRAK'S PANAMA LIMITED left Chicago July 9 with no food or drink. The diner had broken down on the northbound trip, and it left 2 hours late after PC employees found they couldn't fix it. Amtrak said there was no replacement (altho diner 8099 had been sitting in the yard for a long time), and so Amtrak provided complimentary box chicken dinners at Kankakee. (Didn't an Amtrak exec say once that Colonel Sanders was the way to go in food marketing?)..... CONWAY SCENIC RAILROAD is a new tourist line in New Hampshire and it runs its first train on Sept. 14. Tickets are $14.50 ($16 after 9/1) from Mass. Bay RR Enthusiasts, Box 136, Ward Hill, MA 01830--include stamped return envelope..... MORE HORROR STORIES: a malfunctioning diner on the NATIONAL LIMITED on July 6 was switched out in St. Louis and blocked the station entrance for the INTER-AMERICAN, which was delayed 55 minutes as a result..... MIGHTY GOOD ROAD: The Rock Island Lines is offering fine linen tablecloths with the RI trademark in large, medium and small sizes for $9, $7 and $1.50 plus 50¢ each mailing (IL residents add tax) from: Psgr Serv. Dept., Rock Island Lines, Room 200, 139 W. Van Buren, Chicago IL 60605..... ST. LOUIS UNION station has been sold for $2.5 million to a private investment group, it was revealed July 15. Long-term arrangements with Amtrak are being negotiated, and the sale is said to mark the rebirth and revitalization of the beautiful old structure. See the New York Times Magazine, July 21, for an illustrated article on saving old stations of architectural interest..... THE WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION of RR Passengers in a July 15 press release asked Amtrak to improve service in the Northwest by resuming Spokane-Pasco-Portland service, continuing daily operation of the N.C.HIAWATHA, rescheduling the EXPO 74 as a year-round day train, and rescinding all fare surcharges on local trains in the Northwest..... AMTRAK HAS DENIED a request by the California legislature to reroute the COAST STARLIGHT thru Sacramento, Roseville, Marysville & Chico, claiming it would add at least 1hr 20min to the running time. But it said Greyhound this fall will begin a bus connection from Sacramento to Davis for passengers to catch the north-south trains there..... SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY people are up in arms over the downgrading of services on the SAN JOAQUIN, and a Bakersfield newspaper charges Amtrak with "sabotage".....



A MOST EXCITING new train book just off the press is the Rand McNally Guide to Travel by Train, by rail photographer Ed Wojtas. This 112-page, 8½x11 paperback costs only $1.95, and is really up-to-date. Covers all Amtrak routes, in the manner of a train route brochure, and includes Canada, Mexico, and a selection of tourist lines. There's a section explaining how to ride trains, etc., one of the best we've seen. An ideal gift for prospective rail travelers..... QUOTH ROGER LEWIS in Congressional testimony last month: "This summer will be difficult, but it will be difficult in different ways than last summer." Good old Amtrak--always coming up with the unexpected. But just wait till next summer, etc..... CONSTRUCTION WILL BEGIN on SP's controversial new commute train depot at 4th and Townsend in San Francisco on July 17. This architectural masterpiece, said to resemble an ice cream sandwich, is to be completed (and the old building demolished) in eight months..... BUSINESS WEEK MAGAZINE (July 13 issue) devotes one page to "Amtrak's coup in Congress," in which it relates that Amtrak will probably get the $200 million it wants, more than the DOT's $143 million recommendation. The article says that Amtrak has gotten the word that Congress, not the DOT, is most sympathetic to it, and so "(Roger) Lewis is more vigorous now. He's feeling his oats" (quote from a Congressman) ..... HIGH PRAISE FOR the crew of the SOUTHWEST LIMITED in the derailment of July 5 (see last issue) comes in a July 6 Chicago Sun-Times report. They acted just as you'd expect a SUPER CHIEF crew to act--one reason the train is still Amtrak's best. When the dust settled after the derailment, over the intercom came the message: "You have just survived your first train wreck. Please stay seated"..... AND ANTHONY HASWELL of NARP issued a warning about increasing numbers of derailments--last year up 25%, this year 13% more.....



**The THIRD RAIL**
The Magazine of Rapid Transit

**September 1974**

**LEAD STORY – 'American Ground Transport':** A new report by Bradford C. Snell examines General Motors' role in the decline of the street railway as a transit alternative. **cover, pp. 4–6**

**EDITORIALS:** Port Authority Bondholders attempt to block agency's transit role; New York Times finds Federal Government souring on rapid transit; New rapid transit cutback in New York. **p. 3**

**TRANSIT AND THE ENVIRONMENT:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency orders upgrading of Philadelphia trolley lines to help achieve anti-pollution goals. With map. **p. 7**

**ANALYSIS:** Penn Central's latest threat to its Philadelphia commuter service replays a familiar scenario. **p. 8**

**GENERAL NEWS:** Two new commuter extensions in the works for Philadelphia; Cook County, Illinois, voters tip the scales, assuring creation of the RTA; Atlanta's general manager cites inadequacies of Administration funding plans; New bond issue for rail service to appear on New York ballot in November; New chief executives chosen for New York MTA and Port Authority. **pp. 8–11**

**OPENINGS:** Toronto's latest extension opens as part of the TTC's continuing expansion program. **p. 12**

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(continued from page 3)

The car design article by Glenn Lee is a masterpiece! Mr. Lee has touched all the bases in his denunciation of the super-lightweight "death-liners" in which Amtrak officials are so interested. It's high time someone rose to the task of spelling out the basics of RAILROAD car design for Amtrak's mixed-up, aircraft-oriented equipment barons. The picture of future rail travel dominated by these rough-riding rail-bound fuselages is too horrible to contemplate. I hope you will continue to print articles of this type. Don't be afraid to tell the truth about Amtrak's love affair with the aircraft lobby.

Charles A. Rudisel

White Bear Lake, Minnesota

The article on car design by Glenn Lee appears to take a much more realistic attitude on transportation than what is usually printed these days. If new passenger cars cost $500,000 each, it may be that 3-axle trucks would increase the total price by only 1-2%

Charles L. Anderson

Sacramento, California

I found Glenn Lee's article unusually interesting. His well thought out article has given me a whole new outlook on the turbo vs. conventional equipment question. My thanks to RTN for striking new ground in rail journalism...

Thomas Coval

Holland, Pennsylvania

Lee fails to mention two products of the lightweight craze which could be called successful--Pennsy's "Tubular Train" and Budd's Pioneer III. Several dozen Pioneer III's and their close relatives, the Silverliners, have been running on PRR (PC) and Reading for over a decade in both commuter and inter-city service. It would thus be difficult for anyone to call them "part of the U.S.'s plastic, disposable, throwaway society." Lee also fails to deal with the inherent problems of heavier equipment, such as greater initial cost, greater power requirements (are such cars less-fuel-efficient than lightweights?), and increased wear and tear on the track. I remain unconvinced.

Mike Blaszak

West Covina, California

Lee's article on car safety raises very serious questions about the adequacy of contemporary expertise. The present modest renaissance of rail passenger service, like that of rapid transit, has depended to a great extent upon the lobbying power of railway equipment suppliers and of the professional cadre of transport planners. Both have made valuable contributions, but as Lee suggests, both have serious deficiencies that result from their pecuniary interest and their lack of interest and/or knowledge of the past experience of the railway industry. Suppliers, obviously, want to sell what they have ready to sell; and, perhaps more serious, professional planners assume that what they have been trained in graduate school to think of as the solutions are therefore correct beyond dispute. Neither of these assumptions will automatically lead to the best decisions in terms of the public interest, but there has been a general reluctance to challenge them.

Fred Matthews

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

I must say that was a most extraordinary article...Glenn has thrown cold water on the visions of beautiful new Amtrak double-deck longdistance cars that had most of us basking, except on their pricetags. Glenn has shown that heavier cars ride smoother, don't shake apart and last longer, are safer in accidents, and usually can be restored after accidents...

Robert J. Swan

Long Beach,California



# Express Ads

Railroad Uniform buttons 50¢ each postpaid. Denver Tramway Co., Union Pacific, Chicago Great Western, Grand Trunk, Pennsylvania Reading Seashore Lines, Nickel Plate, South Shore Line, Norfolk and Western, Central of Georgia, North Shore Line, Lehigh Valley and Seaboard. J. Lajoie, 22 Stevens, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

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YELLOWSTONE SPECIAL, Oct. 11-15, 1974, will be sponsored by Pacific Railroad Society and Amtrak via the Santa Fe, UP and BN from Los Angeles to Livingston, Mont., and return. All-pullman consist departs LAUPT at 8 p.m., Oct. 11. All-inclusive fares start at $210. Brochure and additional information is available from Pacific Railroad Society, Box 2274, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675.

$1--Railfans' Multimodal Transportation Guide to Vicinity of Los Angeles Union Station; order S #119-R. $2.50--San Joaquin Newspapers--Amtrak Lovefest over a New Train; order "Joy in the Valley." R.J. Swan, Box 1866, Long Beach CA 90801.

Have you ever heard of The Fast Mail? If you have, then you know of our fine reputation of bringing you the latest Amtrak news and timely feature stories. If you haven't, then we invite you to take out a one year subscription (twelve issues) for only $3.25. There's no risk, because we offer you your money back after the first issue. Twentieth Century Railroad Club, 10700 S. Seeley Ave., Chicago, IL 60643.

OFFICIAL GUIDES for sale, 1964 - 1970. Excellent condition. $3.00 postpaid in U.S. Send SAE for list of issues still on hand. Robert Gerstley, 153 Pleasant St., So. Weymouth, MA 02190.

INTERESTED IN SOUTHERN RAILWAY SYSTEM? If so, you should belong to the Southern Railway Historical Society. Membership $5 per year. SASE for information. Dave Read, 3587 Jonathan Circle, Augusta, GA 30904.

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THE HA-MUR COLLECTION is looking for any pictures of passenger equipment of the Georgia Northern; Georgia, Ashburn, Sylvester, and Camilla; Albany Northern; and Flint River and Northeastern Railways. Also needed are pictures of this equipment before and/or after sold to these companies. Please contact: HA-MUR COLLECTION c/o Mark F. Murphy, 2941 Caldwell Rd. Apt. B-4, Atlanta, GA 30319. We do reply.

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